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MAINE AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION.

BULLETIN No. 20.

SECOND SERIES.

DISCUSSION OF CERTAIN COMMERCIAL ARTICLES.

(2) FOODS.

A class of materials commonly spoken of as "Condimental" or "patent" foods, has been found in our markets for many years. Now and then a new one appears, as has lately been the case in Maine. These foods are generally given some pretentious name such as "Condimental Cattle Food," "Imperial Egg Food," "Nutriotide," etc. They usually possess an aromatic or other positive odor, which to the uninitiated gives the appearance of value.

The claims that are made for the nutrient and tonic properties of these commodities are fairly startling as lying outside the range of either common experience or scientific knowledge, and on the strength of such claims these wonderful mixtures are sold in most cases at prices ranging from \$100 to \$2,000 per ton. How utterly absurd both the claims and the prices appear in the light of facts! Repeated careful examinations of these materials show that *without exception they consist principally of common cattle foods, or other common materials, mixed with small percentages of the cheapest and most ordinary medicinal substances.*

The following are the results of a number of examinations made by various experiment stations:

From Rep. Conn. Expt. Sta., 1878, p. 125:

"Condimental Cattle Food," cost \$8.00 per 100 lbs. "It consists chiefly of corn meal and bran. It contains enough fenugreek to give it a strong flavor of that aromatic seed and likewise some seeds like caraway in appearance"

From Rep. Maine Exp. Sta., 1885, p. 52.

“Imperial Egg Food.” Cost 50 cents per pound. Chiefly clam and oyster shells with some bone, also some pepper.

Johnson’s Continental Food. Cost 75 cents for 10 lbs. “A mechanical examination shows that the food is undoubtedly wheat bran with possibly some middlings.” Contains “some fenugreek” and “a little sulphur.”

English Patent Food.” Cost \$1.00 for a bag of 12 pounds. “Appears to be made up of middlings and corn meal, largely middlings. . . .” Contains “some fenugreek.”

From Bulletin No. 20. Mass. Expt. Sta., p. 6.

“The Concentrated Feed.” Cost \$8.00 per 100 pounds. “. . . A mixture of several ingredients, among them was noticeable common salt.”

From Rep. Conn. Expt. Sta. 1888, p. 146.

“The Concentrated Feed for Horses, Cattle, Sheep, Swine, Poultry, etc.” “Apparently consists of a mixture of wheat and corn with thirteen per cent. of salt and perhaps a little of some more concentrated food.” “Costs \$100 per ton in three ton lots, . . . \$160 per ton in small quantities.”

“The Concentrated Egg Producer.” Cost \$4.00 for 12 pounds, equivalent to \$660 per ton. Contains both corn and wheat and some more concentrated food.”

From Bulletin 15, N. H. Expt. Sta.

“Pratt’s Food.” Cost 75 cents for 12 pounds or \$6.00 per 100 pounds. The food appears to be wheat middlings to which has been added some fenugreek and common salt.”

“Weston’s Condition Powder.” Cost 50 cents for package of 3 pounds. “It resembled a mixture of corn meal and cotton seed meal and it had a saline taste and strong odor of fenugreek.”

“Climax Food.” Cost \$1.00 per 12 pounds or \$8.00 per 100 pounds. “It resembled a mixture of fine wheat middlings and wheat screenings together with a small quantity of caraway or fenugreek seeds and small bits of a substance like butter-nut or elm bark,” also common salt 9.77 per cent., Glauber’s salt, 4.50 per cent., and Chili Saltpeter 3.84 per cent.

From Rep. Maine Expt. Sta., 1892, p. 26.

“Pratt’s Food.” Cost \$120 per ton. “Has the appearance of being chiefly ground bran or shorts. Contains a small amount fenugreek.” “Contains something less than 3 per cent. of common salt.”

From Rep. Conn. Expt. Sta. 1893, p. 244.

“Nutriotide.” “It contains a considerable quantity of some leguminous seed, some linseed meal and perhaps other feeding stuffs together with aromatic substances (fenugreek, anise seed, caraway and the like,) and over ten per cent. of salt.”

“Silver Live Stock Powder.” Cost \$1.00 per pound. “Consists essentially of ground bone having a dark color and slight odor of coal tar.”

From Crop Bulletin No. 6, 1894, Me. Board of Agr.

“Nutriotide.” Cost 25 cents per pound. (Sold in some cases for \$7.00 for 50 pounds.) “Consisted largely of linseed meal with a little fenugreek and apparently some pea or bean meal. It contained 18.67 per cent. ash, a large part of which was common salt.”

The following are some of the statements that have been made by men who are students of animal nutrition, in regard to condimental cattle foods in general.

“Mr. Lawes of Rothamstead, England, made a most thorough, practical trial on the use of condiments in feeding, and demonstrated that there is no profit in it.”—*Rep. Conn. Expt. Sta., 1878, p. 125.*

“The foods have no greater nutritive value than wheat bran, middlings and corn meal from which they are made, while the small quantities of fenugreek and sulphur are utterly valueless to a well animal, and a poor reliance as a means of curing a sick one.”—*Rep. Maine Expt. Sta. 1885, p. 53.*

“The practice of buying compound feeding stuffs in the general market, without a sufficient *actual* knowledge regarding the kind or the character of its various ingredients, ought to be decidedly discouraged ; for the farmer who pursues that course, leaves his best interest to mere chance.”—*Mass. Expt. Sta. Bul. 20, p. 7.*

"It has been abundantly proven that condimental foods have no advantage over others by reason of the condiments in them. As medicines they may well be distrusted in view of the absurd claims made by the seller."—*Rep. Conn. Expt. Sta.* 1888, p. 148.

"Quack horse doctors and Concentrated Cattle food manufacturers are twins, and they flourish, not on the ignorance of farmers, but on that lingering remnant of old times, which made saltpeter and sulphur the universal cure-all for horses and cattle. The foods reported below are worth only from \$20 to \$25 per ton. So far as the medicinal claim is concerned, . . . even the treatment of a 'Quack' is better, and certainly cheaper, than the wholesale use of mixtures of unknown composition."—*Bul. 15, N. H. Expt. Sta.*, p. 3.

FACTS TO BE REMEMBERED.

(1) The mixture of ingredients contained in the ordinary foods comprises all that are known either to practice or science as useful to animal life.

(2) The ordinary cattle foods supply animal nutrition in the most useful and economical forms.

(3) Condimental foods are absurd as medicines. If an animal is well no medicine is needed, if ill, remedies adapted to the case should be administered.

(4) The farmer could manufacture his own "condimental" food at a fraction of their usual cost, by mixing a small amount of such common substances as salt, sulphur, saltpeter, fenugreek, caraway, &c., with the daily grain ration.

W. H. JORDAN.

MAINE STATE COLLEGE, }
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